

Permanent home



JAIME CAMPOS PHOTOS

Local artist Amanda Beard Garcia talks about the process of painting the mural during the unveiling of a Black Lives Matter mural in partnership with the Beverly Main Streets at the Beverly Public Library in observance of Black History Month.

Black Lives Matter mural moved from street to Beverly library

By PAUL LEIGHTON
Staff Writer

BEVERLY — A Black Lives Matter mural that was temporarily displayed on a fence on downtown Cabot Street now has a more permanent home.

About 50 people gathered on Tuesday, the first day of Black History Month, for the unveiling of the mural inside the main branch of the Beverly Public Library on Essex Street. The crowd applauded as Beverly High School students Selieka Johnson-Hyre and Claire Patch pulled down a tarp to display the section of the fence hanging on the wall in the teen room on

the second floor.

The mural, by Beverly native Amanda Beard Garcia, shows a large black heart with the words “Black Lives Matter” painted on a yellow fence.

“It’s really awesome,” Garcia said as she stood in front of her newly displayed mural. “When I first painted the fence I expected it to be temporary like the other paintings had been. So it’s really cool for it to continue on, especially at the library.”

Garcia painted the mural as part of a Beverly Main Streets program to create a rotating art gallery on a fence located

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Beverly Public Library Director Allison Babin speaks before an audience during the unveiling of a Black Lives Matter mural painted by Amanda Beard Garcia in partnership with the Beverly Main Streets at the Beverly Public Library in observance of Black History Month.

LIBRARY

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between the Lindsey Building and the Atomic Cafe in downtown Beverly. Garcia, 32, who lives in Dracut, said she chose the theme for her mural on the day Beverly held a Black Lives Matter march in July 2020.

Due to the significance of the mural's message, Beverly Main Streets and the Lindsey Building Condo Association collaborated to donate the fence to the library. On Cabot Street, a new red fence will include a plaque letting people know that the old fence and mural is now at the library.

Main Streets has also

worked with local businesses to display a banner with the mural's image so that it will continue to have a visual impact outside the library.

In remarks to the crowd, Johnson-Hyre said the displaying of Black Lives Matter signs gives many Black people "a feeling of comfort and a feeling of being welcome and safe in our community."

"Driving through neighborhoods seeing that people care and knowing that we are heard instead of being oppressed like we were before is so phenomenal," she said.

Abu Toppin, the city's diversity, equity and inclusion director, said the Black Lives Matter mural will be "a powerful symbol to the people who come into this

building."

"And how fitting is it to have this artwork here in the library?," he said. "A place where people gather for learning, insight and growth. I look forward to the learning that will happen when someone comes on this floor. I will also look forward to the young Black and brown children who come here and see this empowering artistic symbol and hope they feel the same sense of hope and acknowledgment that I do when it see it."

Beverly Library Director Allison Babin said she sees the acquisition of the mural for the library as both "a wonderful way to preserve a piece of Beverly's history and a call to action, a bold, visible message." She said she



Guests listen attentively during the unveiling of a Black Lives Matter mural painted by Amanda Beard Garcia in partnership with the Beverly Main Streets at the Beverly Public Library in observance of Black History Month.

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hopes the mural will make everyone feel welcome when they walk into the library, "especially those who have not always felt welcome or represented in our public spaces."

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